



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Venusse D. Navid
Public Information Officer
213-257-2000
VNavid@da.lacounty.gov
Twitter: @LADAOOffice

Nov. 1, 2019

Funding Increased for Staffing and Training for Prosecution of DUI Cases

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has been awarded a \$1.3 million grant, from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Since 2016, the District Attorney's Office has taken a leadership role in training local law enforcement personnel and deputy district attorneys to investigate and prosecute cases involving alcohol and drug-related traffic offenses. The DUI Training and Prosecution Section (DTAPS) was implemented to further District Attorney Lacey's goals of preventing impaired driving and reducing alcohol and drug-related fatalities and injuries.

In Los Angeles County, the number of misdemeanor Driving Under the Influence of Drug(s) cases presented for filing consideration dramatically increased between 2017 and 2019 (285 cases in 2017, 1,018 cases in 2018, and 1,009 cases as of September 30, 2019). The escalation in DUI Drug cases appears to be consistent with the findings of a 2017 study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, which determined that there was an increase in other states where recreational marijuana has been legalized. Education and enforcement will help to counteract this rise in impaired driving.

In September 2019, specialized prosecutors in DTAPS secured a conviction in the killing of an innocent pedestrian, standing at a parking kiosk at the Santa Monica Courthouse, by a driver who was impaired by Cannabis. Several murder cases handled by the unit involve drivers impaired by a variety of impairing substances, including Cannabis, Nitrous Oxide, Prozac, Clonazepam, Cocaine, PCP, and Methamphetamine. DTAPS prosecutors have received special training in drug-impaired driving enforcement, better enabling them to handle these complex prosecutions.

The funding from OTS has and will continue to improve the training tools and resources used to work with police agencies and increase the number of officers who are certified Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) in Los Angeles County. DREs are in a unique position to articulate the effects of impairment caused by the various drug categories and they can determine if someone was impaired by drugs, alcohol or a combination of the two, while driving. Their testimony in DUI Drug cases is an invaluable asset in the effort to deter drug-impaired driving.

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.